GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:396
ANSWERED ON:09.04.2003
VISIT OF AFGHANISTAN PRESIDENT
NEDURUMALLI JANARDHANA REDDY;VSM (RETD.) COL. CHOUDHARY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the President of Afghanistan had visited India recently;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held and the agreements signed;

(c) whether Indian businessmen have been invited to set up joint ventures in Afghanistan as a step to boost trade relations; and

(d) if so, the response of the Indian businessmen in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a)-(d) A statement is placed on the table of the house.

Statement referred to in parts (a)-(d) of the answer to Lok Sabha Starred question no.396, to be answered on 9.4.2003

Yes sir. H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai, President of Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan had paid an official visit to India on 5-8 March 2003.

During the visit, discussions were held on a range of issues, including bilateral cooperation, status of implementation of various Indian assistance projects in Afghanistan, implementation of the Bonn Agreement including work on the new Afghan Constitution and elections in Afghanistan in 2004, as well as the continuing threat to regional peace and stability from terrorist activities. A Bilateral Preferential Trading Agreement, aimed at expanding India-Afghanistan trade relations, was signed on 6 March 2003 by Commerce Ministers of the two countries; Prime Minister announced a financial commitment of US$ 70 million, over and above the US$ 100 million already available as grant, for the construction of Zaranj-Delaram road segment in Afghanistan; and the third of three airbus aircraft, from Air India to Ariana Afghan Airlines, was formally handed over to the President Karzai himself on March 7, 2003.

In their interactions, Afghan government officials have generally explained the laws relating to foreign investments and setting up of joint ventures in Afghanistan. Business organizations in India, including Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Confederation of Indian Industries have been actively exploring opportunities to set up joint ventures in Afghanistan.